

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 04276 041056Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 SSO-00 /010 W

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0224

S E C R E T JAKARTA 04276

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: ALLEGED MALIK STATEMENT ON TIMOR

REF : (A) STATE 073271, (B) JAKARTA 4188

1. WITH ENTIRE TOP ECHELON OF FOREIGN DEPT. ABSENT FROM JAKARTA SINCE APRIL 2 WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO, CHARGE HAS RAISED SUBJECT OF ALLEGED MALIK STATEMENT WITH DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN DIRECTORATE AND HEAD OF PRESS OFFICE.

2. WE HAVE LISTENED TO TAPE OF MALIK INTERVIEW AND ALSO HAVE TRANSCRIPT OF SAME INTERVIEW. FROM THESE, IT IS APPARENT THAT STRAITS TIMES ARTICLE QUOTED REFTEL B COMBINED MALIK ANSWERS TO TWO DIFFERENT QUESTIONS. REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIA BELONGS TO AN EARLIER QUESTION. WHAT MALIK ACTUALLY SAID WAS THAT THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN AS MANY AS 16,000 REPEAT 16,000 CASUALTIES FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF FIGHTING IN TIMOR. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON TO STATE THAT THE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER WAS THE NUMBER WHO WERE ALIVE TODAY. ONE MIGHT REFER TO 50,000 DEATHS BUT THAT WOULD STILL LEAVE 600,000 WHO HAD CHOSEN UNION WITH INDONESIA. ONE MIGHT ALSO REFER TO 60,000 BUT THERE WOULD STILL BE 580,000 WHO HAD CHOSEN UNION WITH INDONESIA. WHILE THESE COMMENTS MIGHT SEEM TRITE, ONE MUST LISTEN TO THE TAPE FULLY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT MALIK WAS SAYING IN HIS

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USUAL BANTERING SYTLE WITH THE PRESS. IT IS CLEAR THAT HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT WHILE IT IS TRAGIC THAT MANY HAVE DIED, IT IS A HAPPY THING THAT SO MANY MORE ARE ALIVE TODAY.

3. FROM DISCUSSIONS AT FOREIGN DEPT., IT IS CLEAR THAT GOI IS FULLL AWARE OF SERIOUS POTENTIAL OF THE PROBLEM POSED

BY MALIK STATEMENTS.

4. HOWEVER, FOREIGN DEPT. STATES THERE IS NO ESTIMATE OF ACTUAL NUMBER OF CASUALTIES ON EAST TIMOR. THEY STATE THAT NO CENSUS HAS BEEN TAKEN OF THE ACTUAL PROPULATION OR OF CASUALTIES. CHARGE WAS SHOWN EXCERT FROM RECENT MALIK INTERVIEW WITH FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW IN WHICH HE REFERRED TO POSSIBILITY OF 60,000 CASUALTIES, INCLUDING 40,000 REFUGEES. THIS, IT WOULD SEEM, WOULD LEAVE ESTIMATE OF SOME 20,000 TRUE CASUALTIES ON ALL SIDES.

5. FOREIGN DEPT. OFFICIALS WERE QUITE FRANK IN STATING THAT THEY DID NOT PLAN TO ISSUE A PUBLIC STATEMENT IN JAKARTA ITSELF SINCE NONE HAVE BEEN OFFERED HERE PREVIOUSLY. HOWEVER, SPOKESMAN WILL REQUEST REUTERS TO REPRINT INTERVIEW BASED ON TAPES AND FOREIGN DEPT. WILL AT SAME TIME TRANSMIT THIS TO INDONESIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON IN ORDER THAT LATTER MAY USE IT IN REPLY TO INQUIRIES.

6. AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR ALSO SHOWED US CABLE SENT CANBERRA FOLLOWING CONVERSATION WITH MALIK BY TELEPHONE PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO. ACCORDING TO TELEGRAM, MALIK SAID HE HAD NOT REPEAT NOT SPOKEN AS QUOTED BUT HAD GIVEN AN APPROXIMATE FIGURE OF 16,000 WHICH WAS INTENDED TO INCLUDE ALL PERSONS KILLED ON ALL SIDES AND INCLUDING CIVIL WAR PERIOD BEFORE THE INVOLVEMENT OF INDONESIAN "VOLUNTEERS." HIS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ABOUT 50,000 OR 60,000 PEOPLE HAD BEEN RHETORICAL.

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7. FYI: A SECTION OF TAPE SCRIPT DEALING WITH CASUALTY FIGURES READS AS FOLLOWS: "IF WE (UNCLEAR) 16,000. IF THEY SAY 50,000, WE REPLY THAT THERE ARE STILL 600,000 LEFT. IF THEY SAY WE KILLED 60,000, THERE ARE STILL 580,000. THAT IS THE TRUTH: THEY LIVE." RIVES

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